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Research & Insights +

Ideas in Action +

People & Places +

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Archives +

Home > Archives > 2016 > May/June > Innovations Through Education



Innovations Through Education

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Three schools are having an impact on education through innovations that train teachers, upgrade courses, and deliver new programs to partner universities.

1. UNIVERSIDAD DEL PACÍFICO (UP) FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS EMPRESARIALES AND ESCUELA DE POSTGRADO IN LIMA, PERU



THE INNOVATION: A collaborative program with Peruvian Public Universities Faculty that aimed to strengthen their capabilities in several fields, including business, economics, and public management.

THE SITUATION: El Programa de Intercambio Educativo (PIE)—also known as the Academic Exchange Program—was devised as a way for Universidad del Pacífico to have a positive effect on the socioeconomic development of the country.

Through the PIE program, professors from throughout the region apply for one-month residential programs in business, economics, and public management on the UP campus. Each program includes approximately 100 hours of lectures, seminars, and field visits to private and public organizations. Because UP faculty train fellow teachers from public universities, PIE is considered a peer-to-peer collaboration.

Through the program, participants are exposed to innovations in teaching methods, discover new ways of disseminating knowledge, and learn to develop research capabilities anchored in local needs. Many have returned to their own schools and instituted new instructional methods, including hands-on learning experiences and collaborations with local businesses.

A mix of junior and veteran faculty are selected for PIE every year, and they all receive grants that cover tuition, transportation costs, and living expenses while they're in Lima. The school also offers students scholarships to its social investment management master's program.

The PIE program is funded to a large degree by the university's Patronato, or association of benefactors who are both corporations and individuals; group members also help identify the major national and regional needs the PIE program should address.

Currently, the school is looking for additional funding from sources such as the Ministry of Education and the National Council for Science and Technology, which support teacher training programs. It also is considering presenting the PIE training model to international cooperation programs, says Cecilia Montes, director of institutional relations.

The school offers follow-up activities that include an annual academic conference, where selected professors present research papers. In addition, the school holds an innovation contest, where participants submit descriptions of their teaching innovations. The winning professor is invited to the next course to receive an award and share his innovation with the new class.

"This motivates more faculty to take part in future editions of the contest," Montes notes.

While the school is still designing methodology that will measure the program's impact, it's clear that it has attained far-reaching success. Originally launched with fewer than ten participating universities, PIE now is nationwide: It has spread to all 25 regions of Peru and trained more than 400 public university faculty members.

Details about the PIE program can be found at www.up.edu.pe/pie. A Spanish-language paper describing the impact PIE has had on participating faculty over the years is available at www.up.edu.pe/fondoeditorial/SiteAssets/El-campus-esel-pais-PIE.pdf.

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